

Transit Planning Board

Work Program June-December 30, 2008

This work program is designed to be an evolution of the Adopted 2006-2007 Transit Planning Board Work Program. It has been modified based upon the direction provided by the Board at the February 28, 2008 meeting. The priorities set by the Board at that meeting are as follows:

- Public Involvement;
- Travel Demand Modeling and Analysis of Concept 3;
- Funding/Financial Plan; and
- Regional Governance Structure.

Other tasks not prioritized by the Board but require attention to be brought to a reasonable conclusion to facilitate future advancement of regional transit efforts include:

- Regional Fare Policy; and
- TPB Exit Strategy

Task 1 – Public Engagement Campaign

The goal of Task 3 will be to engage the general public, stakeholders, existing and potential future public transit riders, local regional and state elected officials and representatives. Our Main purpose is to raise general public awareness of the existing regional transit services and the benefits of regional transit in addition to receiving feedback on the proposed regional transit vision Concept Plan (Concept 3). We will investigate people's perception of the need for regional transit and how we should pay for it through our large sample public opinion survey. The aim is to inform the public about existing transit options and to allow the public and their elected decision makers to make informed decisions regarding the role of transit in the Atlanta region. The TPB will work in a collaborative effort with various partners in the region to build a solid foundation of consistent information regarding the role, need, costs, and benefits of transit in the region and to document the public's input to the regional transit vision.

Subtask 1.1 – Build Public Understanding and Acceptance

- Develop key messages and initial collateral (public information pieces) for public engagement process
- Develop initial material for Legislature briefings
- Research media contacts and develop materials for the press
- Conduct outreach to primary key stakeholders to identify support groups including a public opinion survey on the need for and benefits of regional transit
- Build regional coalition
- Conduct public opinion survey to determine attitudes and perceptions about public transit and how the public feels about paying for these services.

Subtask 1.2 – Focus on Legislative Strategy

- Interface with key Legislators, other primary key stakeholders and regional leaders that have legislative influence

- Continue legislative communications as needed through end of 2008 Legislative session
- Keep the Board informed about legislative action
- Discuss potential activities and consequences related to the results of the 2008 Legislative session

Subtask 1.3 – Public Engagement Process

- Continue conducting outreach to a cross section of regional stakeholders
- Identify opposition to regional transit and develop tailored strategies, if necessary, to inform and provide factual information to the opposition
- Conduct proactive media relations around public engagement activities
- Plan and conduct a series of Town Hall Meetings to solicit input on Concept 3 and regional transit
- Document all public engagement accordingly
- Provide feedback to revise Concept 3 to reflect public questions, comments and suggestions as required

Subtask 1.4 – Regional Map Maintenance

After the publication of the regional transit map in November, 2007, the TPB will continue to work to update the regional map on a regular basis. Additionally, efforts will be made to integrate the regional map with the maps of the service providers in the region

The resulting Task products: Will include a full summary report of the public involvement efforts and activities and summary report of the public opinion survey and analysis of the survey results.

Task 2 – Travel Demand Modeling and Analysis of Concept 3

The proposed objective of this work task is to determine regional benefits associated with this Concept Plan, **not individual project benefits**. Specifically, the focus of the modeling effort is to quantify the regional transportation benefits that are associated with this Concept Plan when compared to ARC's Envision 6, our baseline system. Thus, the Concept Plan is to be modeled in its entirety and not on an individual project basis. Future modifications of the plan, after public input are anticipated but not specifically a part of this work effort. This task will be jointly undertaken by TPB and ARC Staff with some participation from the TPB consultant team.

Subtask 2.1 – Define Service Plan

Further definition of the Concept 3 Plan is required prior to a modeling effort. Alignments, station locations, run times and a service plan must be defined for all rail and BRT projects. Alignments, park-and-ride lots, transit centers and service plans must also be defined for a regional express network, regional suburban bus network and the local bus network. It is important to note that service plan assumptions in this modeling effort will not reflect the recommended transit network. Rather, these assumptions are to reflect a reasonable representation of a transit network. For example, this model network will reflect a network of regional suburban bus routes. Final determination of an appropriate regional suburban bus route network will eventually require further analysis of ridership performance and cost effectiveness characteristics on an individual route basis. That required further analysis will not be undertaken as part of this work effort.

The Concept Plan transit network will use the Envision 6 transit network as a starting point/baseline. Service Plans will be defined in a manner that is consistent with the target service-hours identified in the Concept 3 Plan. The detailed service plan should then be reviewed by TPB in association with ARC and the various regional operating entities.

The resulting product will be a detailed Operations Plans Technical Memorandum that presents the proposed service plan in sufficient detail for network coding.

Subtask 2.2 – Network Coding

The service plan that is defined in Task 2.1 must then be coded. The Envision 6 transit network will be used as a starting point/baseline. Coding is anticipated to be a significant work effort. For example, Envision 6 presently assumes an expansion network of express and BRT bus service along I-75 and portions of I-285. The BRT network that is assumed in Envision 6 will need to be stripped out before the Concept Plan's rail and local/feeder bus transit lines can be added in.

Subtask 2.3 – Model Application

The defined Concept 3 Plan transit network will then be applied to the ARC model with ARC's 2030 socioeconomic data and with Envision 6's highway network. Model application is often an iterative effort that requires refinements to the initial network coding efforts as errors are discovered.

Subtask 2.4 – Determination of Project Benefits

Results from the model run will then be used to determine transportation benefits associated with the Concept 3 Plan. The evaluation effort will focus on determining the following transportation benefits when compared to Envision 6:

- *Transit Accessibility.* Illustrate the geographic area that is accessible to transit with the Concept Plan vs. Envision 6. Perhaps have 2 sets of maps – one that portrays transit accessibility, the other that portrays accessibility to premium transit.
- *Regional Summation of Transit Boardings and Mode Share by Trip Purpose.* Tabulate boardings and mode shares for the Concept Plan vs. Envision 6.
- *Summation of Mode Shares by County.* Tabulate mode shares at the County level for the Concept Plan vs. Envision 6.
- *Summation of Mode Shares by Activity Center.* Tabulate mode shares for activity centers the Concept Plan vs. Envision 6.
- *Transit vs. Auto Travel Time Comparisons.* Prepare a table that presents auto vs. transit travel times for various regional movements. Include transit travel times for the Concept Plan vs. Envision 6.
- *User Benefit Hours of Savings.* Using FTA's Summit software, graphically identify TAZ's in the region that realize a savings in transit travel times for the Concept Plan when compared to Envision 6. Tabulate user benefit hour savings as well.

The resulting product, the evaluation results, including potential ridership levels are to be presented in a Technical Memorandum and summarized in a power point presentation.

Subtask 2.5 – Refine Capital and O&M Cost Estimates

Refinement of the Concept 3 Plan's transit service plan will allow for refinement of capital cost estimates and O&M cost estimates. ***The resulting product*** will be a spread sheet with updated capital and O&M costs for the Concept Plan.

Task 3 – Funding and Financial Planning

In addition to advocating for dedicated funding for transit the TPB will continue its work on a financial plan for the regional transit concept. Using the information from Task 2.4 and 2.5 we will revisit our previous analysis look at funding availability, existing and potential future revenue sources and identify funding needs. We will also use this information to determine a phased implementation approach for the Concept Plan which will also provide input to the needed yearly revenue flow to implement the plan.

Task 4 – Regional Governance and Funding Scenarios

This task is designed to help the Board reach an informed decision on regional governance and funding.

Subtask 4.1 – Regional Governance Scenarios

The TPB will continue its task of working with the Board to discuss the difficult issues of regional transit governance through examination of different potential governmental structures. The TPB staff will assist the Board in gaining agreement on a future regional transit governance framework and then develop various paths to reach that framework. This effort will include a possible APTA Peer Review panel of experts from other regional systems. This group could come together over a 2 to 3 day period to study the Atlanta regional situation and make a report of recommendation as to how to proceed towards a regional governance structure.

Should the Board decide/agree upon a regional transit governance structure the TPB staff will work on a strategy for the implementation of this structure and prepare to transition its effort to this entity.

Subtask 4.2 – Legislative Monitoring

The TPB staff will monitor activities in the Georgia Legislature throughout the Legislative season with regards to how the actions of the Legislature impact regional transit. In addition the TPB staff will provide data, information and analysis to the legislature on the need for, benefits of and funding needed to support a transit network for the Atlanta region. The TPB will present Concept Plan 3 as a draft blueprint for transit in the region. The TPB will continue to advocate for dedicated funding for transit including participating with other regional coalitions, organizations and agencies that are actively involved in the effort to gain transportation funding. The staff will keep the Board informed of the potential consequences of any legislative actions with regard to regional transit and will be able to be used as an information resource by the legislature regarding regional transit issues.

Subtask 4.3 – Implementation Options

The TPB will develop potential strategies regarding regional concept plan implementation, service coordination, and regional transit system development (both construction and operations) for

consideration by the Board within the framework of whatever actions, if any, the state legislature takes.

Task 5 – Regional Transit Service and Operations Coordination/Performance Measures

The objective of this task is to establish performance measures and create a data reporting structure for all of the regional transit operators to periodically submit data into an Atlanta regional template. The TPB has set up a transit service performance monitoring system framework per best practices nationally with provisions for the local context, institutional structures, and operating environments. It currently reports financial figures on an annual basis and report quarterly on Service Availability and Service Frequency. The report could be compiled and issued quarterly, bi-annually, or annually. The system includes all modes and types of transit including, but not limited to, demand response, rail, shuttle services, express buses, local buses, arterial buses, etc. These efforts will continue throughout this work program with additional Performance Measures within the framework added as possible.

The connectivity among the various existing transit services will be evaluated and opportunities for improved service coordination such as better transfers and elimination of duplicate routes will be identified. A strategy for implementing suggested changes will be identified as well. The MARTA System Optimization and Reengineering Study (MOVE) may form a basis for some of the work for this task along with information from the Comprehensive Transportation Plans currently being developed by counties and other municipalities in the region.

Subtask 5.1 – Service Coordination Committee

The provision of a forum for dialogue between the various providers of public transportation in the Atlanta region is a success of the TPB. The TPB will continue to host the monthly meetings of the Service Coordination Committee to discuss areas of mutual concern, provide system updates, discuss upcoming roadway construction projects and seek coordinated responses from the transit providers, seek areas where coordinated services can be implemented and explore the sharing of facilities.

The *Bus Maintenance Forum* will continue as a sub-committee of the Service Coordination Committee. It will meet on an ad-hoc basis rotating among the facilities of the various bus transit facilities to foster communication and advocate for joint-procurements, discussion solutions to technical problems, trade ideas related to innovation and establish contacts and lines of communication between the various transit providers. Inter-agency agreements for maintenance services will be promoted.

Subtask 5.2 – Paratransit Service Coordination

Paratransit services are a very challenging issue for public transit providers. Currently MARTA, CCT, C-TRAN and GCT operate ADA Complementary paratransit in support of their fixed route non-express services.

With the growth in eligible populations forecasted in demographic trends for the region, the providers are struggling to keep-up financially. Additionally the paratransit systems suffer from a lack of coordinated approaches to human service transportation in the region and from “trip-dumping” by contractors to the Department of Community Health. Paratransit service also forms

an obstacle to regional service coordination. Transit providers along cannot bear the burden of human service transportation without additional funding and service delivery strategies. When service providers travel outside their service areas or start to operate “open door” service in areas previously not served it opens up new liabilities related to paratransit. The TPB will provide the forum for implementation of a regional study to provide the recommendations for implementation of regional solutions to paratransit to include:

- Integration with ARC Human Services Transportation Coordination Planning efforts;
- Working with MARTA in its study or this type regional paratransit solution;
- Opportunities for tapping into alternate funding sources for certain trips; and
- Recommendations on a template on how to provide “regional paratransit trips” between the various jurisdictions in support of service coordination efforts.

The study will be let by MARTA under its General Planning Consultant contract and will be supported by the TPB *Paratransit Task Force* Subcommittee of the Service Coordination Committee.

Subtask 5.3 – Cross-County Bus Coordination

TPB staff will seek opportunities to create a regional clearinghouse of technical support, Automatic Passenger Counter equipment and expert staff to support NTD data collection particularly for the smaller transit systems. Many of these systems are eligible but do not report data to the NTD due to the lack of institutional capacity to handle the administrative burden. These efforts will be coordinated with ARC Transit Operators Subcommittee (TOS).

Subtask 5.4 – Regional Operating Efficiencies for Small Systems

TPB staff will assist the smaller transit systems in exploring opportunities related to service coordination such as a regional procurement of service delivery (“Service by the Hour contract”) and better integration with the revenue providers.

Subtask 5.5 – Inter-Campus Services for University Systems

With the prevalence of joint-degree programs and the academic common market between the various campuses around the Atlanta region a large demand for transit service between campuses has emerged. Campuses also purchase large volumes of fare media from the revenue fixed-route providers but have been forced to implement their own inter-campus services since the services of the revenue providers does not meet their needs completely. TPB staff will explore better connections between the University transit systems and the region’s local bus, express bus and heavy rail systems and see if there are opportunities to coordinate existing services to make service delivery more cost-effective for all involved.

Subtask 5.6 – Coordinated Service Disruption Response Support Activities

TPB staff will seek to update the existing TPB regional transit assets inventory and distribute to Service Coordination Committee members. Additionally TPB staff will explore implementation of a service disruption response MOU between the providers and/or regional participation in the APTA Mutual Aid Assistance Agreement.

Task 6 Regional Fare Policy

The goal of Task 6 is to build upon the earlier research done by the staff and discussed with the Board to clearly identify and the issues that must be dealt with and suggest some possible solutions

based upon other per transit systems. This effort could be complemented by a partner agency staff discussion and to identify any immediate action items that could be accomplished in the near to set the stage for the future resolution this issue that is critical for a seamless future regional transit system. A recommendation of a regional fare policy in the Atlanta region for all existing and planned new transit agencies may be able to be accomplished.. The policy could address all types of service currently offered and service types which are expected to be offered. The policy should be based on a multi-agency regional system with the objective of increasing the use of public transit throughout the region via increased ease of use, accessibility, affordability, and convenience. The suggested fare policy could lead to the point of identifying some potential implementation points.

Subtask 6.1 – Identify Pilot for Regional Fare Product

With all of the regional operators scheduled to have the *Breeze* card fare system operational by the spring of 2008, it becomes possible to schedule the pilot program of a regional fare product. Using the initial regional fare product proposal from July, 2007 developed by TPB, staffs, working with the regional operators we can identify a proposal for the implementation of a pilot regional fare product.

Subtask 6.2 – Fare Structure

Staff will continue, as directed by the Board, to bring before the Board potential fare structures and work with the regional partners to develop potential scenarios for fare structures within the Atlanta region based upon the existing work.

Task 7- TPB Exit Strategy

The TPB Board has committed to a December 2008 conclusion of the TPB's work. This task will identify all of the needed ongoing tasks and get commitments for existing entities to continue these activities. The TPB staff will document the status of all of its reports and required actives and prepare these materials for hand off to others or for permanent filing. A lot of this activity depends greatly upon the results of the Board discussion of regional transit governance and what actions may be taken on that topic.